



July 2006 Newsletter

News You Can Use...

\$45 Million in State Budget to Serve English Learners



California's schools include 1.6 million students who are not native English speakers. These English learners comprise one quarter of all California public school students and in most schools are the biggest percentage of students not passing the High School Exit Exam. These students must not only master a new language, but at the same time meet California's high academic standards.

Assemblymember Joe Coto worked to gain passage of AB 2117 and to successfully include \$45 million in the state budget to help ensure that these students have the tools to achieve academic success. The funds provide for two complementary programs:

- A professional development program to provide California's teachers the principles of second language acquisition and skills to assist English learners in mastering course content at the same time they're learning English. Eighty five percent of California's teachers now teach English learners. The vast majority report that they do not have the knowledge or skills to do the job well.
- A three-year 25,000 student pilot project to objectively identify best instructional practices in meeting the needs of English learners. The best practices project will identify already successful English learner programs in elementary schools, middle schools and high schools from across the state. The Hewlett Foundation has agreed to design an evaluation of this project. At project's end, the California Department of Education will publish a list of substantiated best instructional practices for practices English learners.

These projects secured bipartisan support in the Legislature and received support from all eleven members of the Assembly Education Committee. With the Governor's signature of the budget, we have an important opportunity to close the achievement gap and ensure that California prepares a workforce to compete effectively in a global economy.



Congratulations to Special Olympics Athletes

The Global Special Olympics is a grass-roots movement that got its start on July 20th, 1968, when the first International Special Olympics games were held at Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois. Over 1,000 athletes gathered in June for the Special Olympics Northern California's annual summer games on the Cal Berkeley campus and surrounding areas.

These Special Olympics athletes and coaches from Northern California competed in aquatics, track & field, bocce, tennis and volleyball. An opening ceremony showcasing the parade of athletes and Olympic style torch lighting kicked off the weekend's festivities. The fun continued with a full day of competition on Saturday. An outdoor barbecue dinner and dance and competition concluded on Sunday.

Assemblyman Coto, a strong supporter of the Special Olympics, congratulates the participants in this

year's event and commends the coaches, volunteers and sponsors.

Spare the Air Day June 1 to October 13, 2006

During the summer months when ground-level ozone, or "smog," becomes a pollution problem, Spare the Air advisories are issued for days on which the air quality is forecast to be unhealthy. The summer of 2006 Spare the Air Season runs from June 1 through October 13.



Participating public transportation services, including BART, CalTrain, and VTA, offer free service for a certain number of Spare the Air days. 2006 is the first year that there have been enough funding for 3 days of free public transportation. This year's ridership has achieved record breaking numbers. Funding for additional Spare the Air days are currently being sought. For more information, visit www.sparetheair.org or www.511.org.

TAB 956 (COTO) Takes Aim at Environmental Clean-up



The cleanup of Brownfields (soil contaminated by past toxic and unsafe uses such as buried gasoline tanks) and other impacted sites in California are of great consequence to human health and safety and the environment. State and local agencies along with redevelopment agencies are at the forefront of cleaning up these impacted sites. However, information regarding approved site specific actions remains elusive or confusing because it is not readily available to the public or is too expensive to obtain. Lack of information about Brownfield cleanups have caused confusion and created exclusivity among experts who know about actual cleanup procedures and processes. AB 956 will shed light on the process and centralize useful information for the public. This bill promotes transparency in government decision-making by providing information regarding agency approved environmental remedies on contaminated sites to a much broader audience. AB 956 promotes equal access to environmental information and increasing community awareness about site cleanups. AB 956 is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee, working its way through the legislative process.

SB 1245 Expands Coverage For Cervical Cancer Screening



SB 1245 is co-authored by Assemblymember Coto and nine other members of the Legislature. This bill will expand the coverage for an annual cervical cancer screening test provided by a health-care service plan or a health insurance policy to include the human papillomavirus screen test (HPV). According to screening guidelines provided by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Cancer Society, the HPV test should be used in conjunction with the Pap test for routinely screening women age 30 and older for HPV and cervical cancer. The bill will specify an additional requirement for health-care service plans. It will make violation a crime.

Early Detection Is the Key

Prostate and Ovarian Cancers Affect Men and Women



MEN - After skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer among men in the U.S. The American Cancer Society claims that annually 220,000-250,000 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed and about 28,900 men will die of the disease. **Early detection is the key to increasing the chances of living a full life.** During the month of September, the National Prostate Cancer Coalition and its affiliates will offer free screenings. For more information, visit www.fightprostatecancer.org.

WOMEN - Ovarian cancer is often called the "silent killer" because of its vague symptoms. As a result, it is often improperly diagnosed until it has reached an advanced stage. **Early detection is the key to surviving ovarian cancer.** Women ages 18 and up should visit their gynecologist on an annual basis to

receive a pelvic exam or to discuss cancer's symptoms. For more information, the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition has created an ovarian cancer information hotline at 1-888-OVARIAN and a Website at www.ovarian.org.

Congratulations to Dr. Armando Valdez for his work in assisting in the effective screening for breast and cervical cancer. Epidemiological data reveal that low-income, low-literacy women in California bear a disproportionate burden of breast and cervical cancer mortality. The majority of breast and cervical cancer deaths occur among the state's poorest, and minority women. These are preventable deaths because breast and cervical cancer are readily and inexpensively detected, and are survivable when detected and treated at an early stage. Tragically many low-income, non-English speaking women are not being screened regularly. In response to this problem, breast and cervical cancer education kiosks for low-income, low-literacy Latinas have been developed and evaluated in California in the past few years. These kiosks are equipped with touch screens that leverage interactive, multimedia technology to overcome linguistic, cultural, literacy and attention barriers that impede regular screening. The bilingual kiosks engage women in a self-directed exploration of breast and cervical cancer risk factors and the importance of prevention, screening and early detection. Clinical trials of these kiosks indicate they significantly increase breast and cervical cancer screening.

The City of San Jose is Looking For Youth Commissioners

The Youth Commission fosters involvement of youth in issues pertaining to municipal government and any other concerns relating to San Jose. Applications accepted until July 28, 2006 at 5 p.m.

Six positions are available in the districts listed below for youth between the ages of 14 and 20:

District 1 – Term ending October 31, 2009
District 2 – Term ending October 31, 2008
District 4 – Term ending October 31, 2008
District 6 – Term ending October 31, 2008
District 7 – Term ending October 21, 2009
Citywide – Term ending October 31, 2008

Appointment process: Copies of all applications will be submitted to the appropriate council member for review and selection. Newly appointed youth commissioners will be sworn-in during a ceremony tentatively planned for August 15, 2006.

Applications located in the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (408) 535-1260, or at www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/vacancy.htm.

For additional information: (408) 277-2744.



Congratulations To Adan Lupercio!

Newly Elected President of Evergreen Valley College Students Body

Congratulations to Adan Lupercio on his election as President of Evergreen Valley College (EVC) Associated Students. Adan, who currently attends EVC, is a community activist in the downtown Washington neighborhood *"I am very active because I want to make a positive difference in my community and in my life. I decided to make my college experience a positive experience. What I learned from helping my community and fighting for programs and other funding, I want to apply to Evergreen Valley College."* said Adan.

The office of Assemblymember Joe Coto is extremely proud of Adan's dedication and service to our community. We congratulate him on his success and look forward to working with him.

'Reading First' Extension Provides Resources For Alum Rock School District



The Alum Rock School District is justifiably proud of the progress it has made in kindergarten thru grade three reading achievement. In the past three years, using funding from the federal government, Alum Rock teachers have instituted the Reading First program. Using the Reading First program, teachers have helped students achieve strong gains in reading.

The Reading Program was set to end (sunset) this year, but with the authorization of additional federal funds, AB 2248 (Coto) has been introduced to extend the sunset for two more years (through 2007-08). The Reading First plan serves about 400,000 California primary years students (including those in Alum Rock Union School District). It authorizes an eligible district to use specific instructional materials and to receive grants of up to \$6,500 per teacher in kindergarten thru grade 3, to enhance reading instruction.

Additionally, AB 2248 seeks to refine and improve the accountability, monitoring and inclusion components of the Reading First program. It calls on the California Department of Education, in consultation with the State Board of Education and Technical Assistance Centers, to continue to develop an accountability process used in the implementation of Reading First. The bill also defines the "significant progress" that districts are required to demonstrate to continue in the program.

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